



COAI

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I-DIGEST

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CONTENT

- 3 From DG's Desk
- 5 COAI Latest Updates
- 8 News Wires





LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

As India enters a defining phase of digital transformation, driven by AI, 5G, satellite technologies and smart infrastructure, COAI continues to champion the need for fair, future-oriented and investment-friendly policy frameworks. The month of May saw a renewed focus on regulatory clarity, digital equity and the importance of strengthening India's telecom backbone through collaborative and transparent governance.

A key concern this month has been the ongoing issue of mobile connectivity in the Mumbai Metro. Despite telecom service providers' (TSPs) readiness to invest in robust in-building solutions and their proposal to provide seamless, free-of-cost mobile connectivity for commuters until commercial terms could be finalized, Mumbai Metro has chosen to create a monopoly through a third-party vendor. This approach not only ignores consumer-first proposals but also imposes extortionate costs on TSPs, undermining the spirit of the new Telecommunication Act and Right of Way (RoW) Rules, which prohibit public authorities from denying TSPs access in public spaces. The industry remains committed to pursuing fair and transparent infrastructure deployment, ensuring that commuters enjoy uninterrupted connectivity without unreasonable financial burdens.

On World Telecom Day, with the theme 'Gender equality in digital transformation', we reaffirmed our commitment to empowering women and bridging the digital gender divide. India's telecom sector now connects 1.2 billion subscribers and has expanded 5G coverage to 99.6% of districts, serving as a catalyst for digital inclusion and economic empowerment. We are intensifying efforts to address affordability, digital literacy and access barriers through partnerships across industry, government and communities, ensuring that every woman can participate fully in India's digital future.

Spam and fraudulent communications remain a challenge as spammers increasingly exploit over-the-top (OTT) platforms, even as TSPs enforce stringent preventive measures. We have called on the Department of Consumer Affairs to urgently notify guidelines to prevent spam in business communications and continue to urge that OTT platforms be brought under the same regulatory and cybersecurity frameworks as TSPs. This "Same Service, Same Rules" principle is essential for consumer protection and trust.

At the same time, the industry is advocating for a 'fair share' contribution from large OTT platforms that generate significant network traffic but do not currently share in the costs of infrastructure maintenance and upgrades. Such a move would enable continued investment in network quality and innovation, benefiting all consumers.

With 99% of villages now connected via 5G and the government's ambitious plan to achieve 100% broadband connectivity in every village, India is well on its way to be amongst the global leaders in the 6G era. And the telecom



sector's role in catalyzing domestic manufacturing, creating jobs and supporting national economic growth remains stronger than ever.

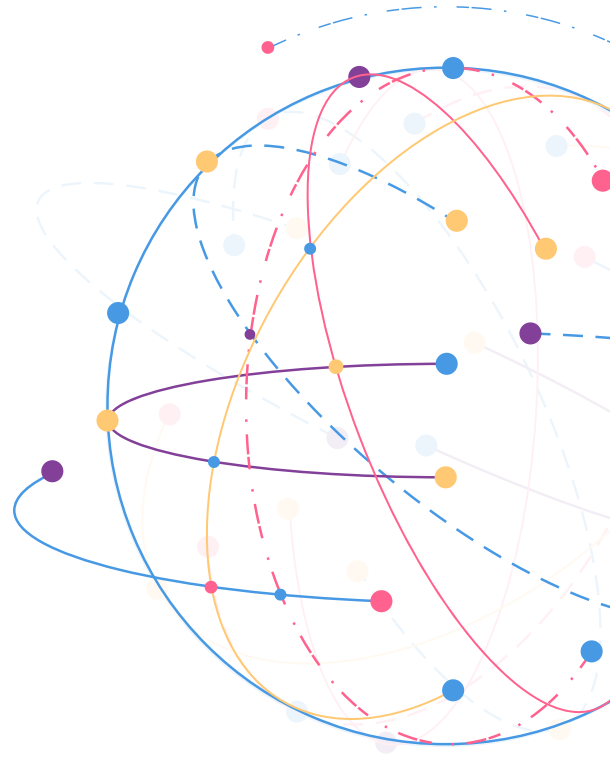
We urge all stakeholders — regulators, government bodies and industry partners — to work collaboratively towards a transparent, fair and forward-looking regulatory environment. Only then can we sustain the momentum of India's digital transformation, ensuring that connectivity, innovation and inclusion reach every corner of our nation. As India races toward unlocking a \$1 trillion digital economy, telecom must be treated as a critical enabler, not a regulated utility burdened by legacy policies. COAI remains firmly committed to advocating for equitable regulation, spectrum certainty, cyber-secure networks and infrastructure-friendly practices that can propel the nation into its next digital chapter.

– LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)
Director General, COAI



COAI

Latest Updates:



COAI Letter to TRAI regarding information for the preparation of comprehensive index and rating framework for digital connectivity and services for villages in India

COAI submitted a letter to TRAI on 01.05.2025, raising the concerns regarding granular level data sought by TRAI which is largely unavailable with our member TSPs and had requested TRAI to reconsider seeking this information. TRAI was further requested to consider using technology-agnostic village point-level coverage data, which is practical for TSPs to provide and is suitable for the proposed framework.

Letter to DoT on TRAI Recommendations on Issues related to critical services in M2M Sector

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 08.05.2025, requesting that DoT should classify and regulate all critical M2M services centrally, thereby ensuring uniform security standards and performance benchmarks across all sectors for such services. Further, DoT should mandate that all critical M2M services should operate only on licensed spectrum for guaranteed QoS, security and interference-free connectivity.

Response to Pre-Consultation paper on review of tariffs for Domestic Leased Circuits

COAI responded to TRAI on 19.05.2025, stating that the Indian DLC market does not require any regulatory intervention. Further, given the prevailing competitive market conditions, absence of any evidence of market failure and the wide availability of advanced technological alternatives, there is no justification for initiating a consultation on this issue at this time.

Letter to Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana

A submission was made to the Chief Secretary, Telangana on 05.05.2025, requesting urgent intervention regarding unilateral Aerial Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) cutting in Hyderabad. Support was sought in advising the concerned DISCOM (TGSPDCL) to immediately suspend all ongoing cable cutting activities and sufficient time be provided to our members to move OFC underground

without service disruption. A meeting request was also made.

Submission given to Hon'ble Minister (IT & CP), Government of Maharashtra

Submission was made to Hon'ble Minister, Department of IT & Cultural Program, Government of Maharashtra on 06.05.2025, sharing Industry recommendations for accelerating Telecom growth in the State and requesting implementation of the GoI Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2024, in letter and spirit. It was also highlighted that - processing of all RoW applications through online Portal should be mandated, industry's request of temporary reopening of the Mahasanchar Portal for tower regularisation was reiterated, facilitation of Permission for use of Street Furniture for telecom Infra deployment and implementation of Common Underground Ducts across the State were stressed upon alongside Rationalisation of Restoration Charges and Security Deposit (SD) Fees and other important RoW related issues in the State. This was followed by an E-Mail to the Hon'ble Minister on 24.05.2025, requesting for a suitable time for meeting with the industry to put across the points in detail.

D.O. Letter to Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala

A D.O. letter was written to Dr. A. Jayathilak on assuming the office of the Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala. COAI conveyed that the industry shall work to provide all possible support/assistance to him for the growth and development of Kerala.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry, post 5th State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting

Post the 5th SBC, a submission was made to the Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry on 15.05.2025, requesting for support on the issues discussed during the SBC - such as Important RoW related issues, Local Cable Operator (LCO) related concern, Extending timeline of auto-rejection, Permission for newly laid roads, Regularization of existing towers, facilitating process for New Tower on private lands and buildings, Emission related resistance from the citizens, among other

important issues.

Meeting with National Broadband Mission (NBM), DoT on Ministry of Defence (MoD) related pendencies

An industry meeting was chaired by NBM on 22.05.2025, to discuss the old period pendencies related to MoD. Members were advised to push for getting closures on the open cases which require priority and any application which was not required was to be withdrawn immediately.

Conference of Secretary (T) and State Government officials

A Virtual Conference was held on 22.05.2025, chaired by Secretary (T), DoT and attended by State Officials to discuss the RoW and Portal related issues of the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Members as well as COAI also participated in the meeting and raised the current industry concerns.

Submission to Secretary (T), regarding Hyderabad Fibre Cuts

A submission was made to Secretary (T), requesting intervention regarding disruption of Telecom Services in Hyderabad and requested for support in advising the State Government to immediately suspend all ongoing cable cutting activities on the duly permitted telecom infrastructure deployed. It was also requested that the industry be allowed sufficient time for making any mutually agreeable changes without service disruption to the consumers.

Jharkhand Notification of Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2024

The Government of Jharkhand notified the implementation of the Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2024, in the State effective from 01.01.2025. A submission was made on 07.05.2025, to Chief Secretary for support in implementing the RoW Rules, 2024 in true letter and spirit.

Jammu & Kashmir State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting

J&K SBC meeting was held on 01.05.2025, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, wherein discussions were held on RoW issues and connectivity challenges in the UT.

Meeting with Chairman, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) on DISCOM pole charges

COAI, along with members, met the Chairman (DERC) on 01.05.2025, to seek support from the Hon'ble Commission in issuance of necessary directions to all the DISCOMs in Delhi, adhering to the charges with regard to installation of telecommunication line or equipment on their pole/s, as per the RoW Rules, 2024.

Submission to Secretary (T) for Exemption in new compliance norms of DG sets

A fresh submission was made to Secretary (T) on 08.05.2025, for support towards facilitating exemption on new norms compliance for Diesel Generator sets in some

of the States.

Submission to Secretary MoEFCC for Support on OFC laying

A submission was made to Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) on 08.05.2025, reiterating the industry's request of Exemption to Optical Fiber Cable laying works in Forest Areas from the applicability of Compensatory Afforestation (CA) Clause under FCA Rules, 2023. This was also tabled during the ICMC meeting by the DoT on 23.05.2025, chaired by IG Forests, apart from other industry issues.

Engagement with Central Electricity Authority (CEA)

A Submission was made to Member, Grid Operation & Distribution, CEA on early notification of amendment to the Metering Regulations on 13.05.2025. An in-person industry meeting was also sought. Subsequently, an industry meeting was held with Member GO&D, CEA on 23.05.2025, with constructive discussions and deliberations on the way forward.

Chandigarh UT Broadband Committee meeting

The Chandigarh Broadband Committee meeting was held on 13.05.2025, under the chairmanship of Advisor to the Administrator, Chandigarh. Discussions took place regarding the industry's RoW issues and challenges for faster roll-out of telecom services. Members have been requested to provide towers regularization details to the DoT for further action.

Submission to CEO, Noida Authority on RoW permission issues

A submission was made to CEO, Noida Authority on 15.05.2025, seeking an industry meeting to discuss the RoW permission delay on applications filed with the Noida Authority.

COAI Submission to Chief Secretary, Gujarat on Right of Way Challenges

A submission was made to the Chief Secretary, Gujarat on 27.05.2025, for Issuance of directions to all Appropriate Authorities in the State towards implementation of the Right of Way Rules, 2024. Members had raised on-ground challenges despite the State issuing the implementation of RoW 2024 Rules notice.

Unified Portal Demo by National Broadband Mission (NBM)

NBM conducted a demonstration of the new unified portal on 13.05.2025, wherein the Industry, COAI and members participated.

Meghalaya Working Committee Meeting

Meghalaya conducted its working committee meeting, which is constituted under the State Broadband Committee, on 20.05.2025, to discuss relevant industry issues.

Director IT, Manipur conducted a meeting regarding Common Ducts

Director IT, Government of Manipur chaired a meeting on 27.05.2025, to discuss industry inputs and clarify the industry queries on the common ducts proposal by the State PWD.

7th State Broadband Committee Meeting, Odisha

Odisha conducted its 7th State Broadband Committee meeting on 28.05.2025, chaired by the Chief Secretary. Industry issues were raised by COAI during the meeting.

Letter to Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal

A letter was written to the Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal on 19.05.2025, requesting acceptance and implementation of the Right of Way Rules, 2024, in the State immediately.

Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2025

COAI submitted a letter to TRAI on 08.05.2025, with its inputs on the TCCCPR and timelines for the implementation of certain activities.

Request for consolidated Self-Certification for 5G-Relaxed sites as per new TSTP issued by TEC

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 28.05.2025, requesting for consolidated Self-Certification for 5G-Relaxed sites as per the new TSTP issued by TEC.

Request intervention on Industry concerns regarding Unauthorised installation of Repeaters

A COAI letter, requesting intervention on Industry concerns regarding Unauthorised installation of Repeaters, was submitted to DoT on 16.05.2025.

Request for Full Alignment of India's EMF Limits with ICNIRP Guidelines

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 07.05.2025, requesting

for full alignment of India's EMF exposure limits for BTS with 100% of ICNIRP limits.

Request for extension to meet the 2nd phase of roll-out obligations for spectrum in the 26 GHz band

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 08.05.2025, on the extension to meet the 2nd phase of roll-out obligations for spectrum in the 26 GHz band.

Draft Report – Vision, Strategy & Action Plan for Circular Economy in the Indian Telecom Sector

COAI submitted a letter to TEC on 19.05.2025, with its suggestions and inputs on the draft report towards the vision, strategy and action plan for Circular Economy in Telecom Sector.

Concerns towards MTCTE and COMSeC

COAI submitted a letter to TEC on 26.05.2025, reiterating the strategy and operational level challenges being faced by the OEM members while implementing the MTCTE and COMSeC schemes.

Letter Regarding Rule 88A

COAI submitted a letter to GST-N on 02.05.2025, highlighting the need to align the GST portal with Rule 88A & Section 49 of the GST Act, which allows for fungibility of CGST & SGST credits. However, the same is presently not available on the GST Portal.

Issues Pertaining to IMS

With regard to issues pertaining to the Invoice Management System of the GST Portal, COAI met EVP (Services) in GST-N to discuss the issues such as options to correct inadvertent errors, introduction of "hold" option for credit note, rejection functionality for "Place of Supply" to appear on the IMS dashboard, etc.

Mumbai Metro trying to extract monopolistic, extortionate rents for mobile networks:

Mumbai metro has been trying to extract extortionate rents on provision of mobile network, as the industry body argued that under stipulated rules, a public authority cannot deny providing Right of Way to telecom operators in a public place. In order to minimise disruptions, telecom service providers had offered a common network for facilitating mobile connectivity which has been ignored by the Mumbai Metro.

[Read more](#)



WTD 2025: Bridging digital gender divide for inclusive future for India

As we celebrate World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) with the theme, "Gender equality in digital transformation", it is an opportunity to reflect on the telecom sector's role in narrowing the digital gender divide and also to chart the path forward for accelerating true digital inclusion.

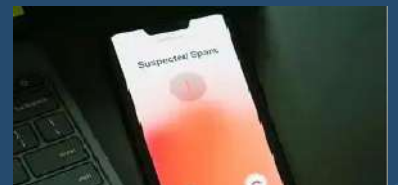
[Read more](#)



Telcos seek rules to tackle spam via business communications:

India's telcos have called on the Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA) to urgently notify guidelines aimed at preventing spam through business communications.

[Read more](#)



India's telecom sector as champion of digital equality

Telecommunication services have emerged as a truly transformative force today. This has not only changed the way we interact with one another but have also contributed to the creation of a digitally connected society.

[Read more](#)



Agentic AI: The Next Frontier for the Indian Telecom Revolution

The Indian telecommunications sector is at a transformative juncture, propelled by the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI). The emergence of Agentic AI - autonomous, goal-driven software agents capable of acting independently - marks a shift beyond traditional automation.

[Read more](#)



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